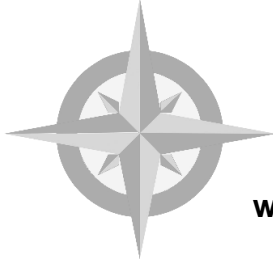


Navigating the Gender Dilemma

Dr. Faith Dugan – CMI Online Director and Leadership Training Instructor



Child Evangelism Fellowship®
is a Bible-centered organization
composed of born-again believers whose
purpose is to evangelize boys and girls
with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to
establish (disciple) them in the Word of God
and in a local church for Christian living.



This statement serves as an anchor that prevents us from drifting off course into a sea of gender ideology. Understanding the distress experienced by those who report feelings of incongruence between their perceived gender and biological sex is a challenge. It is a brokenness experienced by people in this broken world.

I. Gender-related Diagnoses

A. Gender Identity Disorder

"In 1980, gender identity disorder was introduced into the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM III)*."¹

B. Gender Dysphoria

"The fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, published in 2013, introduced gender dysphoria as a diagnosis that focused not on cross-gender identity as itself disordered but on the distress experienced by some who reported incongruence between their gender identity and biological sex."²

¹ Mark Yarhouse and Julia Sadusky, *Emerging Gender Identities: Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Today's Youth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2020), 13.

² Ibid.

NOTE: "If you have true gender dysphoria, you didn't choose it...But while gender dysphoria is a real psychological condition that causes someone to think and feel like a different sex, it doesn't mean that you are a different sex...but there are moral choices that flow from how we respond to our brokenness."³

C. Transgender

"*Transgender* became an umbrella term for gender diverse persons that marked an important shift away from the identity categories derived by doctors and psychiatrists and imagined a future for transgender as an explicitly public and political identity. We can now begin to see how the medical and psychiatric distinction between sex, gender, and sexuality contributed to the later idea that there is no necessary relationship between biological sex and gender identity."⁴

II. Worldview Shift

"A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being."⁵

A. Worldview formation factors:

1. *Authority*: Who has the right to tell me what to do?
2. *Knowledge*: Who knows what is best for me to do?
3. *Trustworthiness*: Who loves me and wants what is best for me?⁶

Through the years, philosophers' and activists' thoughts have contributed to forming the worldview prevalent in our current culture.

³ James Emery White, "The Transgender Issue," *Church & Culture*, May 6, 2021, <https://www.churchandculture.org/blog/2021/5/6/the-transgender-issue>.

⁴ Yarhouse and Sadusky, *Emerging Gender Identities*, 16

⁵ James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog, Sixth Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 6.

⁶ Andrew T. Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does God Actually Say About Gender Identity?* Second Edition (India: The Good Book Company, 2022), 41.

B. Cultural worldview influencers

1. French philosopher, Descartes (1596-1650)

"Descartes formulated the notions of mind and body in a way that gave fundamental importance to the former [the mind] and potentially set the two in opposition. Though it was not Descartes's intention so to do, establishing this psychological foundation for certainty set in place a conceptual framework that makes transgenderism plausible."⁷

2. Genevan philosopher, Rousseau (1712-1778)

Rousseau's philosophy is "now known as *expressive individualism*, the notion that I am most truly myself when I am able to express outwardly what that voice of nature says to me inwardly."⁸

3. The period of Romanticism (1798-1837)

"At its heart, Romanticism sought to find authentic humanity in an acknowledgment of, and connection to, the power of nature."⁹

4. Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Freud believed that "our identities as human beings are in a very important sense fundamentally defined by our sexual desires."¹⁰

5. The Sexual Revolution (the 1960s to 1970s)

According to the Sexual Revolution philosophy, "sexual codes must be shattered if human beings are to be truly free. Those things that inhibit the free sexual expression, even of young children, are oppressive and prevent individuals from truly being themselves."¹¹

⁷ Carl R. Trueman, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 34.

⁸ Trueman, *Strange New World*, 40-41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

The winds of these and other influencers and activists throughout time have caused our culture to drift off course steadily. Without reliable worldview anchors, our culture will continue to drift further off course.

"All knowledge is based on a worldview, either that of man or of God; knowledge is never neutral."¹²

III. **Scripture—Our Authoritative, Trustworthy Anchor of Knowledge**

Scripture clearly teaches God's original and ongoing intent for His creation.

A. God's binary design—male and female

God's creation of humanity is distinct from all else.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, ESV¹³)

"God points to the differentiation of humans into male and female as that which reflects His image. Every person, whether male or female, is designed to reflect something of who God is. And when a husband and wife come together in marriage, they mirror the image of God in a unique way...the image of a man and woman coming together in marriage is the deepest and most intimate analogy in Scripture of God's relationship with His people. When we distort male and female in humans, we distort the image of God and the picture of His relationship with us."¹⁴

B. God's authority over His creation

"The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein," (Psalm 24:1, ESV)

¹² Erwin W. Lutzer, *No Reason to Hide: Standing for Christ in a Collapsing Culture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2022), 228.

¹³ Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

¹⁴ Jeff Johnston, "Transgenderism: Blurring the Lines," *Focus on the Family*, September 13, 2015, <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/transgenderism-blurring-the-lines>.

C. Jesus' affirmation of the Genesis account of creation

“He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’” (Matthew 19:4-6, ESV)

D. Scripture's warning regarding our "inner voice" (the heart)

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 19:9, ESV)

IV. Transgender and LGBTQ+ Ideology in Schools

A. Rainbow Clubs

The Los Angeles Unified School District encourages staff to start a Rainbow Club for LGBTQ+ elementary students and their friends, providing a five-step guide for getting started.¹⁵ A sample Rainbow Club schedule is also provided.¹⁶

B. Gender Classroom Curricula

"In schools across America, kindergartners are taught that biological sex and gender very often come apart; one has no essential connection to the other. There are some people for whom gender identity aligns perfectly with the sex they were assigned at birth: "cisgender" they are called—meaning "on this side of gender," coined to be the definitional opposite of "transgender," meaning "across from gender."¹⁷

¹⁵ “Rainbow Club: A Guide for Getting Started,” Los Angeles United School District|Student Health and Human Services, <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/156/sogje/RCGuide%201.pdf>.

¹⁶ “Rainbow Club Activity Ideas,” Los Angeles United School District|Student Health and Human Services, <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/156/sogje/LAUSD%20Rainbow%20Club%20-%20Activity%20Ideas.pdf>.

¹⁷ Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* (Washington DC: 2020), 63.

1. The Genderbread Person¹⁸

"In a lesson plan titled *Genderbread Person and LGBTQ Umbrella*, kids as young as kindergarten are taught all about sexuality."¹⁹

A free online Genderbread Person lesson plan includes this quote: "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself." (Albert Einstein.)²⁰

2. The Gender Unicorn²¹

"The affirmation of trans-identified students is so essential to their welfare and safety, according to educators, that it is the policy of the National Education Association and many public schools, including those in California, New York, and New Jersey, that when a trans-identified student "comes out" at school, the parents *not* be informed."²²

V. Gender Movement Terminology—From Agender to Ze

"As Christians, we look to the Bible as our authority when speaking or thinking on any issue. In reference to issues surrounding the transgender movement, Vaughan Roberts reminds us that we aren't talking about 'issues' but 'image-bearers.'²³ In our discussions surrounding this complex reality, it is important that we educate ourselves and speak with truth and compassion – remembering that all truth is ultimately compassionate. Learning the language and terms associated with this movement has proved to be challenging even among proponents of the movement.

¹⁸ "The Genderbread Person v.4," (This project is part of HUES, a global justice collective.), <https://www.genderbread.org/resource/genderbread-person-v4-0>.

¹⁹ Hillary Morgan Ferrer, *Mama Bear Apologetics: Guide to Sexuality* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2021), 115.

²⁰ Sam Killerman, "The Genderbread Person v. 3.3—Breaking through the Binary," <https://www.genderbread.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Breaking-through-the-Binary-by-Sam-Killermann.pdf>.

²¹ "The Gender Unicorn," Trans Student Educational Resources, <https://www.transhealthsa.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/The-Gender-Unicorn.pdf>.

²² Shrier, *Irreversible Damage*, 74.

²³ Vaughan Roberts, *Transgender: A Talking Points Book* (UK: The Good Book Company, 2016), 14.

As Nancy Pearcey states, 'The term transgender has been expanded into an umbrella term covering several categories that used to be distinct....'²⁴ This booklet seeks to provide a concise definition of terms associated with transgenderism...that will assist students, parents, & youth workers in loving their neighbors well."²⁵

VI. Navigating the Tough Questions

A. Pray! (Philippians 4:6)

The Importance of Prayer as Our Foundation

"It is not the work we do, the meetings we hold, or the decisions we make that bring the greatest advances in the work; it is the time spent before the throne of God in prayer, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that brings power, laborers, and resources into the ministry."²⁶

B. Listen! (James 1:19)

C. Answer from Scripture! (2 Timothy 3:13-16)

God's Word is our trusted, authoritative source of knowledge.

"Fundamentally, the biggest issue that drives a wedge between an increasingly secularized culture and the Christian worldview is the question of where we get our authority, knowledge, and trustworthiness."²⁷

D. Love! (1 Corinthians 13:6)

"It is only loving to hold to a biblical truth if that truth comes wrapped in love. We are only firmly anchored, able to grow and share the gospel without being tossed about by every idea and argument from both the conservative and progressive ends of the spectrum, if we are speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)."²⁸

²⁴ Nancy Pearcey, *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions About Life and Sexuality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018), 196.

²⁵ Joe Carter, "From Agender to Ze: A Glossary for the Gender Identity Revolution," The Gospel Coalition, U. S. Edition. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/from-agender-to-ze-a-glossary-for-the-gender-identity-revolution>. Accessed April 19, 2023. Reformed Youth Ministries created a free downloadable booklet of this glossary: <file:///N:/Gender%20Research/From-Agender-to-Ze-booklet.pdf>.

²⁶ "Our Culture" by Child Evangelism Fellowship. <https://www.cefonline.com/about/culture/>.

²⁷ Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate*, 46.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

The purpose of our ministry is to "evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to establish (disciple) them in the Word of God and in a local church for Christian living." But avoiding the gender-related questions that children might ask within the context of ministry communicates that we don't want to help them navigate challenging topics. "It will suggest to them that Christians lack the ability to give a compassionate, nuanced answer, and that your faith can't cope with reality."²⁹ Let's prepare to answer those questions gently and respectfully (1 Peter 3:15).

E. Share the Gospel! (Romans 1:16)

Everything else is secondary! In your Gospel applications, emphasize God's authority, love, and trustworthiness in creation. Humans—male and female—are equally valuable and created in the image of God. He made both with purpose and dignity.

F. Remind saved children they belong to God! (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Help the saved children you teach to develop a strong, biblical worldview. This foundation will help kids recognize the truth and discern counterfeit ideology when they hear it. Remind them often that they are made by God and created in Christ Jesus to do the good works He prepared for them to do (Ephesians 2:10).



²⁹ Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate*, 142.